



## Berkshire Food Project: Service-Learning Orientation Packet

Executive Director: Kim McMann  
<http://www.berkfoodproj.org>  
664-7378

Service-Learning Coordinator: Emily Schiavoni  
662-3240 ext 2306  
[eschiavoni@napsk12.org](mailto:eschiavoni@napsk12.org)

The Berkshire Food Project (BFP) serves hot, nutritious lunches Monday through Friday at 12:00 PM at the First Congregational Church in North Adams. BFP was started in 1986 by Williams College students and community residents in response to the declining local economy. There is no eligibility requirement to eat at BFP. All are welcome and a donation box is available for those who wish to contribute. Seventy one per cent of the diners have income levels below the federal poverty level.

Many community organizations contribute money, goods and/or food to BFP. Organic produce from the school gardens is harvested and donated to BFP. North Adams students contribute to BFP not only by volunteering at the site but also through the design and construction of garden beds and the Drury garden shed, the growing of seedlings at the greenhouse, the planting and maintenance of the school gardens and the installation of a garden onsite at BFP.

Berkshire Food Project provides students with valuable learning opportunities. Students can apply academic concepts in an authentic setting, making connections between the classroom and the real world. Students learn about social issues, social service organizations and the food service industry. Students can see firsthand the connection between the school gardens and people. Students contribute to their local community, develop citizenship skills and apply workplace skills such as collaboration, problem solving, accountability, leadership, flexibility and adaptability.

Volunteer Schedule: Typically volunteers work from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM.  
Recommended schedule for STEPS is 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM.

Other Volunteers: Many different people volunteer at BFP and it is possible that your students will work alongside other volunteers.

Group Sizes: Preferred group size is 10 students or less. Check with Valerie if your group is larger.

Teacher/Student Ratio: - Depends on the type of group- School requirement is 1 teacher: 10 students. Students that have a greater need for supervision may need a 1:4 or 1:5 ratio. Check with Valerie prior.

Types of activities: Students may be stocking/cleaning the food pantry, sorting recyclables, setting up the dining room, preparing food, serving lunch, cleaning the kitchen and dining room, and/or washing dishes. The chef or director assigns tasks.

Lunch: All volunteers are invited to eat the meal that is prepared for the day. Typically volunteers eat around 11:30, after preparations are complete and prior to serving.

Confidentiality: The identity of the patrons of the dining room and food pantry should be respected and kept private.

Food Safety and Sanitation Regulations: Berkshire Food Project operates under federal and state regulations for safe and sanitary food service. Many of the rules for volunteers are derived from the regulations such as hand-washing, wearing gloves, and dress code.

Required Dress Code: Volunteers must wear closed toe shoes and a hat (baseball cap) or hair net. One should dress for kitchen work – aprons will be provided. No low cut clothing, short skirts/shorts, inappropriate clothing, etc.

Photographs- Photos may be taken of the facility, of students, and of staff. Photos of diners are not allowed.

Expectations for Student Behavior:

- Display respectful behavior at all times towards everyone at BFP including the patrons, other volunteers, supervisors, etc.
- Show a helpful and cooperative attitude
- Respond to directions from Director and Chef
- Please ask questions to learn more about BFP or to clarify instructions
- All school rules are in effect
- Cell phones/headphones/electronic devices are not allowed onsite and if visible, should be taken by the teacher to be held. If students need access to a phone for an emergency, they should ask the teacher who could arrange access to a phone.

- Students are not allowed to wander around the inside or the outside of the building. Students are expected to be under the direct supervision of a teacher/chaperone at all times.

Additional Information for Teacher/Chaperones:

- Enter through the kitchen door on Summer Street
- Upon arrival, check in with the Chef or Kim McMann
- Introduce all the teachers/chaperones to the Chef and Kim. They will review the plan for the day with students and provide a brief orientation to the rules.
- It is recommended that teachers/chaperones wear their school identification badges
- Maintain close supervision of all students
- Reinforce the directions given to students by the Chef and Kim

Teacher Preparation for Students Prior to Service Day:

- Identify the learning goals of the experience with students
- Have students learn about Berkshire Food Project by visiting their website, by inviting guests or by interviewing experienced students
- Discuss the information in this packet including confidentiality, dress code and expectations for behavior
- Orient students to Service-Learning- Emily Schiavoni is available to provide a classroom lesson on service-learning.
- Hunger Lesson- Students should learn about food insecurity and hunger prior to their onsite experience. Emily Schiavoni is available to provide a classroom lesson on hunger. Free resources are also available at <http://www.foodbankwma.org/learn/yah-curriculum-downloads/>
- Plan a meaningful reflection activity to follow the service experience